8-2012

A Study of Limited English Proficient Students' Perceptions of The Effectiveness of Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education Reading Courses at The University of Texas-Pan American

Mauricio Eugenio De Leon
University of Texas-Pan American

A STUDY OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RESEARCH-BASED BEST PRACTICES IN

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION READING COURSES

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-PAN AMERICAN

A Thesis

by

MAURICIO EUGENIO DE LEON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Texas-Pan American
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2012

Major Subject: English

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Jonikka Charlton
Chair of Committee

Dr. Colin Charlton
Committee Member

Dr. Danika M. Brown
Committee Member

August 2012

ABSTRACT

de León, Mauricio Eugenio, A Study of Limited English Proficient Students' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education Reading Courses at The University of Texas-Pan American. Master of Arts (MA), August, 2012, 86 pp., 12 tables, 39 references, 3 appendices.

The purpose of this study is to assess the research-based best practices instructors at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) implement in their developmental education reading courses, and if these practices effectively address our Mexican, Mexican-American, and Hispanic Limited English Proficient (LEP) population. The data I collected and analyzed for this study consisted of qualitative and quantitative self-evaluation and self- identity questionnaire feedback from students enrolled in developmental education reading courses focusing primarily on the students who are Mexican, Mexican-American, or Hispanic and LEP for the purpose of measuring these students' perceptions of the teaching practices employed. In order to strengthen the findings of this study, other types of qualitative data was also collected and analyzed such as instructor interviews. The results this study yields focuses on providing recommendations based on the final data analysis and calls for future research with specific developmental education student populations.

DEDICATION

I dedicate my thesis work to my loving family. A special feeling of gratitude to my

amazing parents, Cesar and Maricela de León who always encouraged me to work hard at

accomplishing any and all professional, academic, or personal goals. Their love, work ethic, and

push for tenacity has and will continue to encourage me to always strive for excellence. My

brothers Cesar, Javier, and my sister Marcela have never left my side and have been with me

every step of the way. I will always appreciate all they have done.

I also dedicate this thesis to my friends, as well as my professional and academic

colleagues who have supported me throughout this entire process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Introduction

Developmental education courses in higher education have had an ongoing effect on the overall persistence and graduation rates of its institutions. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), in the entire state of Texas, 28% of students who enrolled in a developmental education course in 2004 have graduated as compared to 65% of students who did not require developmental education and graduated (as of 2010) ("THECB," 2011). If you look at developmental education around the nation, these trends are consistent with the previous figures, where "more than one-fourth of 4-year college students who have to take three or more remedial classes leave college after the first year" (Adelman, 2005). This is rather alarming considering that around three-fifths of students enrolled in public 2-year higher education institutions and one-quarter in about 4-year institutions require at least one year of developmental education courses (Adelman, 2005; Horn and Berge, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Based on these statistics it is probable that as the number of students in need of developmental education increases, so does the number of students who will possibly drop out. The necessity for developmental education courses will always be evident; effectively addressing this need and how figuring out how to better serve the students in such courses becomes, then, the ultimate task at hand, and where current research should be focused. Although there has been much research already conducted, numerous studies performed, and

1

many books written about developmental education and the students who require it, there has not been extensive research conducted on the research-based best practices that are used in these courses focusing on a specific population such as students in need of developmental reading and/or a limited English proficient student population.

Before we turn to the specific needs of students who require developmental education, we need to consider how students are placed into these courses. For instance, students who require developmental education in any higher education institution in Texas are defined as not meeting the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirements. The TSI is a program administered by the Center for College Readiness (CCR) whose mission is to ensure that all students entering any higher education institution comply with TSI rules put in place by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) regarding the TSI state law. The CCR's main objective is to aid universities and colleges in ensuring students in Texas are academically prepared to succeed in higher education institutions. As mandated by the state of Texas, TSI assessment is required of all students upon enrollment in order to identify students who require remediation in reading, writing, or mathematics prior to letting them enroll in credit-bearing college courses that are dependent on this level of skill. The most common method of determining TSI status is by student attainment of a passing score on a state-approved assessment. Some of the most common TSI assessments currently in use are the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA), Accuplacer, American College Testing (ACT), Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), and Compass. Students are deemed "college ready" either by testing and meeting minimum passing standards set by the state of Texas and the higher education institution or by passing the appropriate developmental course or courses students were placed in.

Students enrolled in higher-education institutions who are placed in any developmental education course must successfully complete these courses before they are allowed to enroll in the credit-bearing course that follows in academic sequence. For example, students required to enroll in a developmental reading course must pass the course before enrolling in a course that has a high dependency on reading skills. At The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), developmental reading (ENG 1310 – Reading and Vocabulary) must be successfully completed before a student is eligible to take any history, political science, psychology or English class, with the exception of ENG 1301 (Rhetoric & Composition I) and ENG 1302 (Rhetoric & Composition II). Alene Russel, a Senior State Policy Consultant quoted Clifford Adelman, who stated that "the evidence that students who successfully pass through remedial course work gain momentum toward degrees is beginning to build" (Adelman, 2006). In this sense developmental courses "look to the future and the skills needed for success in college" (Arendale; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2010). The successful completion of students' developmental coursework serves as a stepping stone toward the ultimate goal of degree completion.

Developmental education courses should utilize what are known as scientifically-based or research-based best practices. The term "best practice", according to The State Education Resource Center (SERC), has "been used to describe 'what works' in a particular situation or environment. When data support the success of a practice it is referred to as a research-based practice or scientifically based practice" ("SERC," n.d.). Research-based best practices in developmental education courses are promising practices that all higher education institutions should employ or should consider employing.

Research Objective

According to a report published in the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in 2010, "more careful and detailed research is needed to understand developmental courses and the variables that affect their effectiveness" (Arendale; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2010). These variables, of course, are vast and can include just about anything anyone can think of that could have an effect on the instruction and overall outcomes of these courses and maybe even some variables one wouldn't think would have an effect, but could and do. Some of the most researched variables include what pedagogical practices work in these courses in order to yield the most positive results for students. These practices are typically referred to as research-based best practices. To name a few recent studies and publications (2007-2011) that have focused on the overall outcomes of employing research-based best practices in developmental education courses, we can look to the following: "Access At The Crossroads: Learning Assistance in Higher Education" (Arendale; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2010), "Unlocking The Gate: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education" (Rutschow & Schneider, 2011), "Promising Practices for Community College Developmental Education" (Schwartz & Jenkins, 2007), and "NADE Self-Evaluation Guides: Best Practices in Academic Support Programs" (Clark-Thayer & Putnam-Cole, 2009). The majority of literature reference throughout my thesis consists of literature from national and state organizations. I recognize that there is a body of literature that exists in different areas such as rhetoric and composition. However, for the purposes of this study I wished to focus on literature pertaining to research-based best practices employed with students who require developmental education, developmental education in higher education, Hispanic students in higher education, limited English proficient students, and limited English proficient students in higher education. Although there has been extensive

research conducted on research-based best practices, there is a lack of concentration on how these practices are effective for a specific student population such as a particular group of limited English proficient students.

Like the literature referenced above, my project contributes to the scholarship on research-based best practices, but rather than generalizing developmental students as one single population, my research focused on a specific type of student, the Hispanic, Latino, Mexican-American or Mexican limited English proficient (LEP) student enrolled in a developmental education reading course. I should note that although there is a negative stigma associated with the term "limited English proficient", I have decided to use it for this study based on the verbiage that is typically employed in national and state reports, as this is the most popular term used to categorize this population. For the purposes of this study, I will refer to the Hispanic, Latino, Mexican-American or Mexican population as "Hispanic". My study consisted of identifying research-based best practices currently in use in developmental education reading courses at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) and the perceptions Hispanic LEP students have of these practices and these practices' effectiveness. According to UTPA's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) as of Fall 2010, the undergraduate Hispanic population served at UTPA was 90.1%, making this university predominantly Hispanic ("OIRE," 2011). Because the university serves a significant number of Hispanic students, I focused my research on what percentage of the Hispanic students in developmental reading courses self-identified through surveys and questionnaires as having limited English proficiency. The term limited English proficient refers to individuals who have difficulty speaking English. One such definition of LEP states that "while native English speakers have a written vocabulary of 10,000-100,000 words, English language learners will probably know only 2,000-7,000 words when

they begin academic studies" (Rance-Roney, 1995). A student is typically identified as LEP if they have "sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language instruction is in English" (Public Law 103-382).

Overview of Study

I focused my study on qualitative and quantitative data gathered for the Hispanic student population; students were asked to fill out the self-identity and self-assessment questionnaires in their respective developmental education reading classrooms at UTPA in Fall of 2011. Capturing the enrollment of this specific student population in the four developmental reading courses I identified was imperative because the primary focus of the study was centered on students who were not just Hispanic but also self-identified as LEP through the responses they provided on the self-identity questionnaire. I identified the Hispanic LEP population based on specific identifying criteria that students provided through the self-identity questionnaire. Students self-identified as LEP based on questions centered on their proficiency in reading, writing, and verbal communication in English. The results this questionnaire yielded established some promising data that UTPA serves a number of Hispanic LEP students in developmental reading. The identification methods I used for this study as well as the results this study yielded are discussed in further detail in the methodology chapter.

Once I knew who the Hispanic LEP population was, I concentrated on focusing the next part of this study on identifying which research-based best practices the four instructors employed in their developmental reading courses. I, then, focused on measuring student perceptions of the research-based best practices UTPA instructors employed in their developmental education reading courses and their perceived effectiveness with this particular

population. I measuring students' perceptions with the use of the previously mentioned self-assessment questionnaires. In the final part of the study I sought trends or patterns with student perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the best practices that were employed in these courses and how they identified (as LEP or non-LEP).

I focused my assessment measures for the study on qualitative data collected directly from students in their respective developmental reading courses for several reasons. As stated in *Using Theory and Research to Improve Access and Retention in Developmental Education*, "Scholars have primarily taken a quantitative approach toward studying these areas (developmental education); few have centrally featured student voices and the nature of their educational experiences" (Higbee; Arendale; & Lundell, 2005). Rather than relying solely on quantitative measures, the qualitative data I collected with the use of the self-assessment questionnaire focused directly on students' voices and perceptions central to my research, zeroing in on the research-based best practices that were employed in their developmental reading classes. These questionnaires provided perceptions that quantitative measures are unable to capture. This doesn't mean, however, that I did not collect any quantitative data, only that I placed an emphasis on the qualitative data. The quantitative data I collected was useful in strengthening the interpretation of the qualitative data by corroborating and extending what was learned from the quantitative statistics.

I collected student data at the beginning and end of the Fall 2011 semester through student's developmental reading classrooms. I collected the instructor data by interviewing the instructors in their respective offices that same Fall semester. An example of a qualitative question incorporated in the beginning of the semester self-identity questionnaire is the following: Do you feel you will have difficulty in your developmental reading class. If so, why?

I collected the quantitative data through the use of the self-identity questionnaire with questions that asked for pre-determined responses that can be quantified for the purpose of providing a percentage of a specific population. An example of quantitative questions on the same questionnaire included: "What is your age?", "What is your gender?", "Where were you born?", and "What was the first language you learned?" The end of semester self-assessment questionnaire also included questions for the purpose of collecting qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data served the purpose of measuring students' perceptions of the instructors' teaching practices, and focused specifically on the research-based best practices the instructor employed in their classroom and their effectiveness. The questionnaires also included general questions about their experiences in their developmental reading classroom based on their English proficiency such as: "Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class?" (Appendix B - Self-Assessment Student Questionnaires)

Students completed these questionnaires during their developmental reading class time with the consent and permission of the developmental reading instructor as well as the consent of the students themselves. The approximate number of students who participated in completing both questionnaires was 53. The data, the results the data yielded, and the recommendations based on the results will be explained more in detail in Chapter 4: Findings and Chapter 5: Conclusion.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Developmental Education in Higher Education

There are numerous definitions of developmental education in higher education, more

commonly referred to as basic skills education or remedial education. These definitions range

from national to state to institutional, depending on the agency, and from individual to

individual, depending on the circumstance. For instance, developmental education, as defined by

The National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), "promotes the cognitive and

affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum" ("NADE,"

n.d.). According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, developmental education

"refers to the range of courses and activities designed to prepare students to complete credit

bearing college courses successfully" ("THECB," 2008). At present a definition for

developmental education does not exist at The University of Texas-Pan American, but one is

currently under production. However, South Texas College (STC) – a college in the same region

as UTPA – states the following in their mission's statement for developmental education:

"Developmental Education at South Texas College is committed to bridging any educational

gaps in students' backgrounds so that they can be successful in college-level work" ("STC,"

n.d.). Although these definitions and missions statements are slightly vague, one characteristic

they have in common is that they all believe developmental education courses are implemented

and designed to strengthen students' basic skills in writing, reading, and mathematics so they

may be successful with college-level work. The fact that national and state agencies support developmental education courses and initiatives is imperative considering the percentage of students who require such courses. Patricia Cross in "Accent on Learning" estimated that only 10% of the underprepared students who attended college would likely complete a degree without some form of academic intervention. Without such interventions, obtaining a degree is unachievable for these students (Cross, 1976). Enrolling students in developmental courses alone, however, does not alleviate the issue of college preparedness for students.

According to a commissioned report published for the national symposium on "Postsecondary Student Success: Spearheading a Dialog on Student Success," "More than one-fourth of 4-year college students who have to take three or more remedial classes leave college after the first year. In fact, as the number of required developmental courses increases, so do the odds that the student will drop out" (Kuh; Kinzie; Buckley; Bridges; & Hayek, 2006). Developmental education courses in the U.S. are found in over 70% of universities and about 90% of community colleges (Boylan; Bonham; Claxton; & Bliss, 1992). According to a 1996 report by The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) almost 30% of students who enter two and four year post-secondary institutions require developmental English, reading or mathematics courses (Lewis & Farris, 1996). These numbers indicate a trend we are seeing of students who require developmental education but are not persisting in college. The problem, however, is not just that students in developmental education courses don't persist in college; it is that they may not be receiving the support they need in order to succeed within these courses and in future courses dependent on the skills acquired in developmental education courses. This trend we are seeing with students who require developmental education but stop attending college exemplifies the fact that more careful attention should be paid to students who have been

placed in such courses and the curriculum and practices that are employed within them. Addressing these issues then becomes a national priority that universities and colleges need to focus on more seriously. There will always be a population of students who are underprepared for college; this population includes students from a variety of backgrounds including immigrants, veterans, returning adults, or anyone who wishes to attain a college degree but are not prepared to begin taking college level courses. Data from higher education reports throughout the country have consistently shown the need to focus on developmental education. This need, however, points to additional research that needs to be conducted in order to better understand the instructional practices that prove to be effective with this population of students.

Developmental education statistics around the nation vary from state to state and from institution to institution. According to a report published by the Education Commission of the States, findings from a 2002 national survey indicated that the percentage of students enrolled in developmental education courses at community colleges across the country ranged from 10% to 72%, at public four-year institutions these percentages ranged from 6% to 50%. In the state of Texas, the percent of students enrolled in 2-year institutions that required developmental education was reported at 61%, the percent of students who required developmental education in a 4-year institution was reported at 30% (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002). This broad range of student percentages across the nation indicates a need to better understand developmental courses and "the variables that affect their effectiveness" (Arendale; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2010). Within these national and state percentages it is difficult to identify what percentage of students were enrolled in what level of developmental education or what developmental education course or courses were required of them. These statistics for Texas, however, were available through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

According to the latest data available (FY2008) from THECB, when comparing South Texas to the rest of Texas, the percentage of students who required developmental reading and writing was larger in South Texas when compared to all of Texas. In South Texas 67% of students met their reading requirement as opposed to 76% statewide (9% difference), and 74% of students met their writing requirement as opposed to 82% statewide (8% difference) ("THECB," 2010). The data referenced above uses pass/fail rates gathered from (insert year/s). This data indicates that the higher education institutions in deep South Texas, which includes UTPA, have a higher rate of students that required developmental English over the total rates of students who require developmental English in the entire state.

Developmental Education at The University of Texas-Pan American

The University of Texas-Pan American is involved in various initiatives that focus on the success of students in need of developmental education. Some of these initiatives are focused on mathematics developmental education courses and include the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) and more recently the Developmental Education Demonstration Project (DEDP), which also focused on developmental reading and writing. In developmental reading and writing courses, other initiatives were pursued and yielded positive results. These included the Fast Track option which consisted of pairing a developmental writing course with a credit bearing writing intensive course such as a first-year composition course and the pairing of developmental courses with other types of credit-bearing courses that sometimes form learning communities. Although it is difficult to identify what interventions specifically resulted in higher pass rates and lower drop, fail, and withdrawal rates, there is evidence that some of these interventions succeeded in achieving higher pass rates.

At UTPA, the percentage of pass/fail rates for developmental reading indicates minor fluctuations between semesters depending on enrollment in courses, instructor teaching the courses, and other variables. These pass/fail percentages are illustrated in the table below (Table 1) with data taken from UTPA's Developmental Reading courses from Fall and Spring semesters starting Fall 2007 all the way to Fall 2011.

Table 1. Number & Percent of Students who Passed, Dropped/Failed/Withdrew (DFW) a Developmental Reading Course: Fall 2007 to Fall 2011										
	Fall 2007	Spring 2008	Fall 2008	Spring 2009	Fall 2009	Spring 2010	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	Fall 2011	Total
Number Passed	167	62	130	51	112	37	104	30	112	805
Percent Passed	73.2%	71.3%	73.9%	71.8%	68.7%	61.7%	74.8%	63.8%	76.7%	72.1%
Number DFW	61	25	46	20	51	23	35	17	34	312
Percent DFW	26.8%	28.7%	26.1%	28.2%	31.3%	38.3%	25.2%	36.2%	23.3%	27.9%
Number Total	228	87	176	71	163	60	139	47	146	1,117
Percent Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

One can infer from these data that although there was a slight increase in the percentage of students who passed and a slight decrease in the number of students who attained a DFW in their developmental reading courses over a span of the last 5 years, there is always a need for program assessment and always room for improvement. The increase in pass rates can be attributed to a number of causes. These causes include some of the student success initiatives previously mentioned that are and have been implemented at the university as well as a possible implementation or change in the instructional practices that instructors employed in their developmental courses. Tracking and measuring the cause behind student successfulness in these courses which can be attributed to a number of factors is difficult, however, and has not been actively pursued. One of the factors I believe that could and should be attributing to the successfulness of students in UTPA's developmental reading courses is the utilization of

research-based best practices which yielded positive results in other institutions across the nation. The need for developmental education courses at UTPA as well as any other higher education institution will always be evident; figuring out how to address the need is an entirely different issue.

Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education

A critical part of any developmental education course at any higher education institution should be the utilization of what are known as scientifically-based or research-based best practices. The term "best practice" according to The State Education Resource Center (SERC) has "been used to describe what works in a particular situation or environment. When data support the success of a practice it is referred to as a research-based practice or scientifically based practice" ("SERC," n.d.). Grover J. Whitehurst, while serving as Assistant Secretary for Educational Research and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education, defined evidence-based (research-based) education as "the integration of professional wisdom with the best available empirical evidence in making decisions about how to deliver instruction" (Whitehurst, 2002).

Research-based best practices in developmental education course are promising practices that all higher education institutions could benefit from employing with their students. It is, however, important to note that although a particular practice has worked for students with similar variables, this same practice might not be effective for other students in similar educational environments. Educators and institutions who employ best practices must also keep in mind that some practices are more effective than others and new literature and research is continuously making best practice better. This includes best practices employed in developmental education courses. The best practices my study specifically focused on were

"Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods", "Teach Critical Thinking", "Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements", "Teach Learning Strategies", and "Using Active Learning Techniques".

According to the Association for the Study of Higher Education Report published in 2010 "more careful and detailed research is needed to understand developmental courses and the variables that affect their effectiveness" (Arendale; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2010). My study focused on what potential variables are affected the effectiveness of the research-based best practices UTPA employed in their developmental reading courses. Two of these variables are the high percentage of Hispanic students the institution serves (90.1%) and the language proficiency of the Hispanic student population enrolled in developmental reading courses. The presence of the Hispanic LEP percentage of students could ultimately "force the institution to call into question existing policies and practices, in turn prompting recommendations for revising the ways in which the college conducts its business with and for students" (Bers, 1994).

Hispanic Students in Higher Education

According to 2008 United States Census Bureau statistics, 78.3% of all Latino/as in the U.S. reside in 10 states; Texas is number two on this list of states with a total Latino/a population of 9,460,921 (18.7%) ("United States Census Bureau," 2008). The state of Texas is home to 146 public and independent institutions of higher education. 38 of these institutions are public universities; UTPA is one of these. Based on the most current data available (Fall 2010), out of these 38 institutions, UTPA ranks as the second highest in serving Hispanic students based on the percentage of the Hispanic student population enrolled Fall 2010, and second highest in terms of the total number of Hispanic students served overall in the state of Texas. The table on the following page (Table 2) illustrates these figures with multiple data taken from THECB's

Statewide Enrollment by Institution, Gender, and Ethnicity website ("THECB," n.d.). The three

institutions with the highest Hispanic serving populations are highlighted.

Table 2. Hispanic Student Enrollment in Texas Universities: Fall 2003 to Fall 2010						
Institution	Students Enrolled Fall 2003	Students Enrolled Fall 2010	Hispanic Students Enrolled Fall 2003	Hispanic Students Enrolled Fall 2010	Percent Hispanic Students Fall 2003	Percent Hispanic Students Fall 2010
Angelo State Uni.	6,033	6,860	1,270	1,709	21.1%	24.9%
Lamar Uni.	10,379	13,969	487	1,164	4.7%	8.3%
Midwestern State Uni.	6,420	6,133	525	732	8.2%	11.9%
Prairie View A&M Uni.	7,808	8,781	197	391	2.5%	4.5%
Sam Houston State Uni.	13,417	17,236	1,316	2,664	9.8%	15.5%
Stephen F. Austin State Uni.	11,354	12,829	719	1,182	6.3%	9.2%
Sul Ross State Uni.	2,109	2,047	975	859	46.2%	42.0%
Sul Ross State Uni. Rio Grande College	954	1,092	758	859	79.5%	78.7%
Tarleton State Uni.	8,845	9,340	625	924	7.1%	9.9%
Texas A&M International Uni.	4,078	6,853	3,650	6,240	89.5%	91.1%
Texas A&M Uni.	44,813	49,129	3,825	7,020	8.5%	14.3
Texas A&M Uni. at Galveston	1,620	1,867	140	262	8.6%	14.0%
Texas A&M Uni.-Central Texas	0	2,317	0	351	NA	15.1%
Texas A&M Uni.-Commerce	8,353	10,280	453	935	5.4%	9.1%
Texas A&M Uni.-Corpus Christi	7,861	10,033	2,861	3,946	36.4%	39.3%
Texas A&M Uni.-Kingsville	6,841	6,586	4,175	4,010	61.0%	60.9%
Texas A&M Uni.-San Antonio	0	3,120	0	2,026	NA	64.9%
Texas A&M Uni.-Texarkana	1,429	1,803	34	133	2.4%	7.4%
Texas Southern University	10,888	9,557	420	500	3.9%	5.2%
Texas State Uni.-San Marcos	26,306	32,572	4,822	8,199	18.3%	25.2%
Texas Tech Uni.	28,549	31,587	2,942	4,322	10.3%	13.7%
Texas Woman's Uni.	9,701	14,008	1,033	2,336	10.6%	13.7%
The Uni. of Texas at Arlington	24,979	32,975	2,767	5,565	11.1%	16.9%
The Uni. of Texas at Austin	51,426	51,195	6,573	8,993	12.8%	17.6%
The Uni. of Texas at Brownsville	3,703	6,855	3,211	5,875	86.7%	85.7%
The Uni. of Texas at Dallas	13,718	17,128	1,041	1,853	7.6%	10.8%
The Uni. of Texas at El Paso	18,542	22,051	13,164	16,802	77.0%	76.2%
The Uni. of Texas at San Antonio	24,665	30,258	11,226	13,331	45.5%	44.1%
The Uni. of Texas at Tyler	4,769	6,446	221	465	4.6%	7.2%
The Uni. of Texas of the Permian Basin	3,028	4,063	991	1,508	32.7%	37.1%
The Uni. of Texas-Pan American	15,915	18,744	13,771	16,596	86.5%	88.5%
Uni. of Houston	35,066	38,752	6,258	8,641	17.8%	22.3%
Uni. of Houston-Clear Lake	7,776	8,099	1,045	1,768	13.4%	21.8%
Uni. of Houston-Downtown	10,974	12,900	3,949	5,012	36.0%	38.9%
Uni. of Houston-Victoria	2,411	4,095	364	830	15.1%	20.3%
Uni. of North Texas	31,065	36,076	2,816	5,061	9.1%	14.0%
Uni. of North Texas at Dallas	0	2,084	0	558	NA	26.8%
West Texas A&M Uni.	7,023	7,839	920	1,499	13.1%	19.1%

The table above (Table 2) confirms that not only has the Hispanic population grown at UTPA over the course of seven years, but, even more, so that the Hispanic population has grown in nearly all Texas universities over this course of time.

According to NCES's Projections of Education Statistics to 2017, which covers 2006-2017, Hispanics are projected to be the fastest growing group as compared to other groups of students; this will result in a 39% increase compared to a 30% increase for American Indians/Alaska Natives, 26% increase for blacks, 26% increase for Asian/Pacific Islanders, 5% for whites, and a 1% for nonresident aliens (NCES, 2008). Based on this projection, it is reasonable to infer that as the percentage of Hispanic students rises, so must the institutions that meet Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) criteria increase. An HSI as defined in Title V of the Higher Education Opportunity Act under the US Department of Education is an institution of higher education that "is an eligible institution and has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25% Hispanic" (Higher Education Opportunity Act, 2008). HSI's are currently on the rise according to data from NCES's Enrollment Surveys, which confirms that, in 2006-2007, 13% of undergraduate students in higher education were Hispanic ("NCES," n.d.). When comparing the number of HSI's from 1995-1996 to 2006-2007 this number has almost doubled, from 135 institutions meeting this criteria in 1995-1996 to 265 meeting this criteria in 2006-2007. A list of emerging HSI's developed by Excelencia in Education with Fall 2006 enrollment data gathered from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) illustrates Texas is the second highest-ranked state with emerging HSI's with a total of 18; California is listed as the highest state with emerging HSI's with a total of 20 (Excelencia in Education, 2010).

This growth represents a number of outcomes; most obvious of course is that the Hispanic population is larger in terms of number of students enrolled and in terms of percentage of Hispanic students enrolled over all at these institutions. More importantly, as the Hispanic population in higher education institutions grows, so should the research on this specific population in terms of how to better serve these students. This is not to say, of course, that there has not been research pursued with this population in mind. There have been numerous studies conducted and there is extensive research on Hispanic students in higher education. However, this research has not been centered on Hispanic student populations enrolled in developmental education courses, particularly not focusing specifically on qualitative data such as student feedback regarding the practices that are employed in these courses with this population.

According to UTPA's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE) as of Fall 2010 the undergraduate Hispanic population served was 90.1%, making UTPA predominantly Hispanic ("OIRE," 2011). One of the leading factors that sets UTPA apart from the vast majority of other universities in Texas and the rest of the U.S. is our student population. This being the case, research with this specific population should be pursued more actively with students enrolled at UTPA in order to identify how to better serve the majority of its students.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students in Higher Education

According to recent literature on LEP students in higher education institutions, "emphases on diversity in higher education have strengthened calls for greater sensitivity to the special needs of students who do not fit descriptions of traditional college students (young, Caucasian, full-time, native English speakers)" (Bers, 1994). LEP status can be determined in a number of varying ways depending on federal, state, and district definitions. The disagreement between these definitions, however, has made it difficult to determine what population of

students self-identify as LEP for the purposes of the study. The lack of standardizing a LEP definition has also been a concern for national reporting purposes and a leading factor in why "estimates of the LEP population vary widely" (Anstrom, 1996). For example, for Census counts during the 1980's and 1990's, LEP status was determined based on two types of indicators: English speaking ability and language(s) used in home. Respondents were asked to rate their English speaking ability on the following scale: "Very well", "well", "not very well", and "not at all" (Anstrom, 1996).

The federal definition of LEP students as noted in Title VII of the Improving America's school act of 1994 indicates that "a student is LEP if he/she has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate in our society" (Public Law 103-382). Students who meet the following criteria under this definition can be classified as LEP if their native language is not English or they were not born in the US and come from a non-English speaking environment where a language other than English is dominant. Some states either decide to apply the federal definition or offer a simplified version of it. The criteria states typically use to determine LEP status is determined by varying factors: difficulty in speaking, understanding, writing, and/or reading in English, coming from a non-English background, teacher judgments, and other criteria (Anstrom, 1996). In Texas, however, a student may be classified as LEP based on information such as "teacher evaluation, parental viewpoint, or student interview, that the student's primary language proficiency is greater than his proficiency in English or that the student is not reasonably proficient in English" (Texas Education Code s21.455 2001).

Limited English proficiency as defined in "The Feasibility of Collecting Comparable National Statistics about Students with Limited English Proficiency: A Final Report of the LEP Student Counts Study" states that a student who is LEP can be defined as "one who has a language background other than English, and his or her proficiency in English is such that the probability of the student's academic success in an English-only classroom is below that of an academically successful peer with an English-language background" (Cheung, 1994). The term LEP can refer to individuals who have difficulty speaking English; "while native English speakers have a written vocabulary of 10,000-100,000 words, English language learners will probably know only 2,000-7,000 words when they begin academic studies" (Rance-Roney, 1995). For the purpose of this study I determined the best course of action was to construct my own definition of a LEP student based on the previously identified definitions by incorporating select elements of each. This definition applies to students who self-identify as LEP through the use of the self-identity questionnaire that will be described in more detail in the following "Research Design & Methodology" chapter. The definition is as follows:

A student may self-identify as LEP if said student states they meet any of the following criteria:

1. The student was not born in the US and has a low level of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking or communicating in English

2. The student's first language was not English and has a low level of proficiency in reading, writing, speaking or communicating in English

3. The student's primary language proficiency is greater than their proficiency in English

Research Questions Guiding the Study

1. What perceptions do self-identify Hispanic LEP students have with regards to the research-based best practices that are employed in their developmental education reading courses?

2. Do students who have self-identify as Hispanic LEP think the practices that have been employed in their developmental reading courses are effective and why?

3. Are there differences between students who self-identify as LEP and students who did not self-identify as LEP with regards to how these students responded to the research-based best practices that were employed in their developmental education reading courses?

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the following sections of this chapter, I will outline and describe the methodology deployed in this study. In doing so, I will discuss the research design, the researcher's role, the data collection methods used to conduct this study, justification for using the data collection methods, and final analysis of the data collected. The student questionnaires and instructor interviews vital to this study were guided and developed by research in questionnaire development and research-based best practices in developmental education. I analyzed the student and instructor data with the use of data sets and matrices I created for the purpose of identifying trends and patterns. I will discuss the results of this research in further detail in the following "Findings" chapter.

Research Design

Through this study I collected qualitative data from instructors teaching developmental reading courses and qualitative and quantitative data from and about students enrolled in these instructors' developmental reading courses during the Fall 2012 semester. All participating individuals voluntarily agreed to participate in this study by accepting and signing the consent forms they were provided by me, the researcher. Four out of five developmental education reading sections were identified for this study through voluntary instructor and student participation. 76 students completed the self-identity questionnaire (Appendix A) that was

administered to them at the beginning of the semester. Out of these 76 students, 53 students completed the self-assessment questionnaire (Appendix B) that was administered to them at the end of the semester. Out of the 53 students that completed both questionnaires, 44 were Hispanic and self-identified as LEP, giving me a total sample size of 44 students for this study. Each developmental reading instructor also agreed to participate in an interview that consisted of asking questions pertaining to the research-based best practices they utilized in their developmental reading courses. The purpose behind conducting these interviews was to make connections between the instructional practices instructors employed in their developmental reading courses and best practice research that states these practices work for developmental students, ultimately matching a number of the practices employed in these four courses to a research-based best practice.

Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher consisted of developing all the instruments utilized to conduct interviews with developmental reading instructors and obtain student feedback through questionnaires for the purpose of performing this study. This included analyzing the data collected and providing results based on the findings that ensued. The instruments I developed consisted of the self-identity and self-assessment questionnaires that were utilized to collect data pertaining to each student's identity and literacy as well as the student's overall experiences with the practices that were employed in their developmental education reading course by the respective instructor teaching the course. The questions I developed and were exercised during the instructor interviews were developed in order to obtain perceptions and feedback from instructors pertaining to their experiences with teaching developmental reading to all students. These questions also focused specifically on special populations such as students who they

perceived to be LEP as opposed to students who they perceived were not LEP and any noticed differences in the outcomes of using certain practices which were previously identified as research-based best practices.

Data Collection

I collected qualitative data from developmental reading instructors for this study through the use of instructor interviews throughout the semester and through accessing these instructors course syllabi's which allowed me access to identify the research-based best practices these instructors utilized in their courses. The qualitative and quantitative data I collected from students consisted of a self-identity questionnaire I administered to students at the beginning of the fall 2011 semester and a self-assessment questionnaire I administered at the end of the fall 2011 semester.

Justification of Data Collection Methods

Prior to developing the self-identity questionnaire, I conducted research on identity and literacy questionnaires resulting in the creation of a questionnaire that could yield results geared toward identifying LEP students based on the responses provided by each student. The questions pertaining to age and gender were included for the purpose of identifying any trends or patterns among and between the two and the student's responses on the remainder of the questionnaire. The questions that address the student's first, second, and third language learned were similarly included for this purpose, specifically focusing on identifying trends or patterns with the student's responses to the English and Spanish language proficiency questions as well as the students' responses to the practices employed in their respective developmental reading course.

The questions addressing both the student's birth location and the student's difficulty with speaking, reading, writing, or communicating in English were developed with the LEP

definition provided in "Title VII of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994" (Public Law 103-382). According to this law, a student can be defined as LEP if he or she

> has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and whose difficulties may deny such individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society due to one or more of the following reasons:
>
> - was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;
>
> - is a native American or Alaska native or who is a native resident of the outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had significant impact on such individual's level of English language proficiency; or
>
> - is migratory and whose native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant (sec.7501)

The self-identity questionnaire included these identifiers by inquiring on student's birth location, and if they experienced any difficulties with speaking, reading, writing, or communicating in English. The questionnaire provided students with five different ways of responding to the questions that asked how well the student speaks, reads, writes, and communicates in English. The responses that were provided are as follows: "Very well", "Well", "Average", "Not so well", and "Not well at all". I developed this scale of possible responses with U.S. census reporting techniques that are utilized to collect data based on the responses provided for the purpose of identifying LEP status with U.S. residents ("United States Census Bureau,"

2008). If students responded to the question that pertains to birth location with a responses that states they were born anywhere in Mexico and responded to any of the English proficiency questions with "Not so well" or "Not well at all" this self-identifies them as LEP.

In the self-identity questionnaire I also asked students to rate their proficiency with Spanish in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and communicating. As with the questions that pertained to the students reading, writing, speaking, and communicating abilities in English, these questions similarly provided the same possible responses of "Very well", "Well", "Average", "Not so well", and "Not well at all". These questions were included with the fourth statement of the "Texas Education Code s21.455" in mind, which states that a student may be classified as LEP by the language proficiency committee if one or more of following criteria are met:

> (1) the student's ability in English is so limited or the student is so handicapped that assessment procedures cannot be administered; (2) the students score or relative degree of achievement on the agency-approved English proficiency test is below the levels established by the agency as indicative of reasonable proficiency; (3) the student's primary language proficiency score as measured by an agency-approved test is greater than his proficiency in English; or (4) the language proficiency assessment committee determines, based on other information such as (but not limited to) teacher evaluation, parental viewpoint, or student interview, that the student's primary language proficiency is greater than his proficiency in English or that the student is not reasonable proficient in English (Texas Education Code s21.455).

The Spanish proficiency questions were utilized with statement number four in mind, where because these students are now adults, rather than having a parent identify their proficiency in

Spanish and English, they may identify themselves as being LEP depending on their responses to proficiency in English as well as Spanish and if their proficiency in Spanish outweighs their proficiency in English.

I included the question pertaining to primary language based on a report titled "The Feasibility of Collecting Comparable National Statistics about Students with Limited English Proficiency: A Final Report of the LEP Student Counts Study". This report provided a recommended definition of LEP by stating that a LEP student is

> one who has a language background other than English, and his or her proficiency in
>
> English is such that the probability of the student's academic success in an English-only
>
> classroom is below that of an academically successful peer with an English-language
>
> background (Cheung, 1994).

With this definition of a LEP student in mind, students whose primary language is Spanish and whose responses on the language proficiency section indicated that their English is below average self-identified themselves as LEP.

I identified the instructional practices instructors employed in their respective developmental reading courses through review of their course syllabi. Identifying the research-based best practices through the instructors instructional practices consisted of researching what instructional practices were used within each type of best-practice. For example, instructors who stated in their syllabus that students would be "working in small groups a great deal" were initially asked questions to ensure that this instructional practice was in fact pursued in the course. If the instructor verified that this practice was employed in their course, other questions geared toward the perceptions of the instructor regarding the effectiveness of the identified best practice followed, such as: "how do you feel it has worked with your students?" (Appendix C -

Instructor Interview Questions). The following questions I included were similarly geared toward the perceptions instructors have pertaining to the effectiveness of the best practice they employed, however, these questions were now directed toward their perceptions of their effectiveness with students they believed were LEP as opposed to students who they believed were proficient in English. These questions were as follows: "do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?" (Appendix C - Instructor Interview Questions).

In the final phase I focused on matching an instructor's instructional practice with a research-based best practice by verifying with the instructor that their instructional methods fit into one of the research-based best practices that have proven to be effective with developmental education students as per previously conducted research studies. For example, one of the instructional methods a particular instructor employed – "working in small groups a great deal" – fit the description of the research-based best practice: "accommodate diversity through varied instructional methods" (Boylan, 2002). In order to finalize the match between the instructional practice and a research-based best practice, I asked the instructor a question such as "the research-based best practice 'accommodate diversity through varied instructional methods' lists *small group work* as one of these methods, for the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice?" (Appendix C - Instructor Interview Questions). If the instructor agreed this was true, the match between instructional practice and research-based best practice was accomplished and could then be used for the next phase of the study which consisted of gathering data from students whom these practices were employed with.

I also included other questions in the instructor interview that were not directed specifically toward research-based best practices. These questions focused on the instructor's

28

experiences, challenges, views, and perceptions of teaching students who they believed to be LEP. These questions consisted of inquiring as to whether the instructor experienced any challenges in teaching LEP students as opposed to students who are proficient in English, if they believed these challenges impacted the students learning, and if so, how, and finally, if the instructors altered their instructional practices if they thought or knew that one of their students had difficulty with the English language.

Once I identified the two research-based best practices per developmental reading instructor, the following phase consisted of creating questionnaires tailored to students enrolled in courses where these best practices were employed. I developed these questionnaires to focus on students' experiences and perceptions pertaining to the instructional practices employed in their developmental reading courses. Before each question, I included a statement informing the student of the identified best practice utilized in their developmental reading course, then the question pertaining to this practice followed. An example of this statement was: "In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to 'work together in small groups a great deal'". The question that followed this statement was the following: "Did you experience any difficulty while working together in small groups (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students conversations, language issues, etc.)?" (Appendix B - Self-Assessment Student Questionnaires)

I developed these questions to purposefully gather feedback on all students' perceptions pertaining to the specific use of the best practices the instructor employed in their developmental reading courses so I could identify any trends or patterns between students who identified as LEP and any expressed challenges and/or difficulties with the identified practices employed. A

substantial amount of responses stating there were challenges and/or difficulties for any of the best practices from identified or self-identified LEP students would identify difficulties with utilizing these best-practices with this population. I chose to include potential answers to the questions referenced above in order to encourage the students to be reflective. Although this statement could have led students to a bias, I felt it was necessary to include these examples for the purpose of assisting student's articulate possible obstacles. I will discuss in more detail the responses and trends or patterns in the following "Findings" chapter.

Data Analysis

The first part of analyzing the data consisted of looking at the self-identity questionnaires students were asked to fill out. The self-identity questionnaire identified if a student has self-identified as LEP by using one of the three different criteria previously noted. For the purpose of this study, students who self-identify as LEP through at least one of these criteria were the primary subjects this study focused on. I created a matrix of the responses that could qualify a student as LEP based on the criteria previously referenced and noted in table 3 on the following page.

Table 3. LEP Identity Criteria Indicators			
1: Students who are born in Mexico; Students who answered below average on any English proficiency question 2: Students who answered below average on any English proficiency question; Students who answered above average on any Spanish proficiency question 3: Students who answered Spanish as their primary language; Students who answered below average on any English proficiency question *X's indicate questions that if responded under the specified criteria identify a student as LEP			
Identity Questions	**Indicators**		
	1	**2**	**3**
Where were you born?	X		
What is your primary Language?			X
How well do you think you read in English?	X	X	X
How well do you think you write in English?	X	X	X
How well do you think you speak in English?	X	X	X
How well do you think you communicate with other in English?	X	X	X
How well do you think you read in Spanish?		X	
How well do you think you write in Spanish?		X	
How well do you think you speak in Spanish?		X	
How well do you think you communicate with others in Spanish?		X	

Once I knew what students self-identified as LEP, the following phase consisted of collecting data regarding the practices employed in the developmental reading classrooms from instructors through means of conducting instructor interviews. In the following table (Table 4) I illustrate the identified matches made between the four instructor's instructional practices previously identified through their syllabus and the two research-based best practices identified for each of these instructors.

Table 4. Identified Research-Based Best Practices by Instructor and Practice Employed		
Instructor	**Practice Employed**	**Research-Based Best Practice**
Instructor 1	"working in small groups a great deal"	Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods
	"practice writing purposefully about what you read"	Teach Critical Thinking
Instructor 2	"move into smaller groups so we can read and discuss several texts"	Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods
	"introduce you to the complex and challenging reading tasks you will encounter throughout your college career, and to help you develop the reading and study strategies necessary for a rewarding college experience"	Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements
Instructor 3	"working towards one major writing project, and you will do it through a set of distinct stages, revising along the way"	Teach Learning Strategies
	"work in groups, reading each other's writing and commenting on it, (and) sharing ideas from homework"	Using Active Learning Techniques
Instructor 4	"practice writing purposefully about what you read"	Teach Critical Thinking
	"if you had a question for your group members, write to them and keep track of their responses, which you can print up and bring to class to see what kind of replies and communication you are having with your peers"	Using Active Learning Techniques

In the final piece of the data analysis process I reviewed students responses to the instructional practices utilized in their respective developmental reading courses and coded these responses as either positive (did not experience any challenges or difficulties) or negative (experienced challenges and/or difficulties). I then conducted an analysis looking at any trends or patterns between students who self-identified as LEP and student's responses on the instructional practices self-assessment questionnaire. I discuss these results in further detail in the following

"Findings" chapter which will then feed into the overall conclusion of this empirical study ultimately yielding recommendations if warranted and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Brief Overview

In the previous chapter I outlined and described the design of my study specifically

explaining my role as the researcher, the data collection methods I used to conduct this study,

justification for using such data collection methods, and the process of analyzing the data I

collected. In this chapter I will discuss the patterns, trends, and results this study yielded. I

analyzed the student data that I collected with the use of data sets I developed by compiling all

data into a database that was used for the purpose of identifying trends or patterns between two

or more variables. The qualitative data I collected with the use of self-assessment questionnaires

consisted of students responses to the research-based best practices that were employed in their

developmental reading courses. How the self-identified LEP population responded to these best-

practices will be outlined in this chapter and explained further in the following "Conclusion"

chapter under the "Discussion of Results" section.

Results

The results the student data I collected through this study yielded will be explained with

the facilitation of tables (Tables 5 through 12). Tables 5 through 12 illustrate student's responses

in aggregate form for the purpose of explaining trends and patterns among and between differing

variables. The two tables below (Tables 5 and 6) serve three purposes. The first purpose is

outlining all student data collected through the self-identity questionnaire students were asked to

fill out for the purpose of identifying the Hispanic LEP population this study focuses on. In this questionnaire I included general questions such as age and gender, but more importantly I incorporated questions utilized for LEP self-identification such as: birth location, first, second, and third language learned, primary language, ethnicity & nationality, student's proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and communication in both English and Spanish, and if the student had previously taken an ESL class. The second purpose tables 5 and 6 serve is to illustrate the LEP population that was self-identified through the self-identity questionnaire and how this self-identified LEP population responded when compared to all students. The comparison between the LEP population data as opposed to the entire student population illustrates some interesting trends that will be discussed in the next few pages. The third purpose tables 5 and 6 serve is to show any trends with the non-LEP student population when compared to the LEP student population. The first two columns of tables 5 and 6 consist of the question and response options available to students on the self-identity questionnaire. The following 6 columns are broken up into 3 different sections each containing a number column and a percentage column. These three columns represent the three purposes tables 5 and 6 illustrate. The first of the three columns illustrates the total number and percent of students who completed the self-identity questionnaire (76) based on the type of response, the second pair of columns illustrates the total number of self-identified LEP students (36) also based on the type of response, and the third pair of columns illustrates the total number of non-LEP students (40) again based on the type of response provided in the second pair of columns.

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate that a total of 76 students responded to the self-identity questionnaire administered to them at the beginning of the Fall 2011 semester, each row in tables 5 and 6 totals to this equal number of students in the column titled total. A total of 53 students

completed the self-assessment questionnaire administered to them at the end of the Fall 2011 semester. Combined only 44 students completed both questionnaires. Out of the 44 students who completed both questionnaires 36 self-identified as Hispanic and LEP based on the previously referenced criteria. The last six columns on tables 5 and 6 illustrate the number and percent of student's responses from the self-identity questionnaire as well as the number and percent of identified LEP students who responded to this self-identity questionnaire and the number and percent of non-LEP students. For example, the first row on tables 5 and 6 indicates that 64 students (84%) out of the 76 students who completed the self-identity questionnaire indicated their age as being between 18 and 20. The next two columns on this same first row show that out of these 64 students, 31 students (86% of the LEP population) indicated their age as being between 18 and 20. The last two columns on this same first row show the 40 students who did not self-identify as LEP and the number and percent that indicated how they responded to the questions on the self-identity questionnaire. For example, out of the 40 students who did not self-identify as LEP, 33 (83% of the non-LEP population) stated they were between the ages of 18 to 20.

Percentages may at times indicate a 1% overage due to rounding to the nearest whole number

Table 5. LEP Questionnaire Identity Criteria Indicators (1 of 2)							
Questions Pertaining to:	Responses	76 Total Students		36 LEP Students		40 Non-LEP Students	
		#	Percent	#	Percent	#	Percent
Age	18-20	64	84%	31	86%	33	83%
	21-25	11	15%	5	14%	6	15%
	26-29	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	30 +	1	1%	0	0%	1	3%
Gender	Male	42	55%	20	56%	22	55%
	Female	34	45%	16	44%	18	45%
Birth Location	US	50	66%	16	44%	34	85%
	Mexico	20	26%	18	50%	2	5%
	Other	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
	NA	3	4%	2	6%	1	3%
First Language Learned	English	24	32%	0	0%	24	60%
	Spanish	49	64%	36	100%	13	33%
	Other	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
Second Language Learned	English	50	66%	36	100%	14	35%
	Spanish	19	25%	0	0%	19	48%
	Other	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
	NA	4	5%	0	0%	4	10%
Third Language Learned	English	2	3%	0	0%	2	5%
	Spanish	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Other	13	17%	11	31%	2	5%
	NA	61	80%	25	69%	36	90%
Primary Language	Spanish	40	53%	34	94%	6	15%
	English	30	39%	0	0%	30	75%
	Other	5	7%	1	3%	4	10%
	NA	1	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Ethnicity/Nationality	American	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
	Hispanic / Latino	32	42%	11	31%	21	53%
	Mexican American	21	28%	10	28%	11	28%
	Mexican	15	20%	14	39%	1	3%
	Other	4	5%	0	0%	4	10%
	NA	1	1%	1	3%	0	0%

Percentages may at times indicate a 1% overage due to rounding to the nearest whole number

Table 6. LEP Questionnaire Identity Criteria Indicators (2 of 2)							
Questions Pertaining to:	Responses	76 Total Students		36 LEP Students		40 Non-LEP Students	
		#	Percent	#	#	Perc	#
Reads in English	Very well	18	24%	1	3%	17	43%
	Well	28	37%	13	36%	15	38%
	Average	28	37%	20	56%	8	20%
	Not so well	2	3%	2	6%	0	0%
	Not well at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Writes in English	Very well	15	20%	1	3%	14	35%
	Well	23	30%	7	19%	16	40%
	Average	34	45%	25	69%	9	23%
	Not so well	4	5%	3	8%	1	3%
	Not well at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Speaks in English	Very well	26	34%	1	3%	25	63%
	Well	24	32%	16	44%	8	20%
	Average	21	28%	16	44%	5	13%
	Not so well	5	7%	3	8%	2	5%
	Not well at all	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Communicates in English	Very well	30	40%	5	14%	25	63%
	Well	26	34%	15	42%	9	23%
	Average	14	18%	11	31%	3	8%
	Not so well	5	7%	4	11%	1	3%
	Not well at all	1	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Reads in Spanish	Very well	33	43%	29	81%	4	10%
	Well	10	13%	6	17%	4	10%
	Average	16	21%	1	3%	15	38%
	Not so well	9	12%	0	0%	9	23%
	Not well at all	5	7%	0	0%	5	13%
	NA	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
Writes in Spanish	Very well	22	29%	19	53%	3	8%
	Well	17	22%	14	39%	3	8%
	Average	11	15%	2	6%	9	23%
	Not so well	17	22%	1	3%	16	40%
	Not well at all	6	8%	0	0%	6	15%
	NA	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
Speaks in Spanish	Very well	33	43%	29	81%	4	10%
	Well	11	15%	6	17%	5	13%
	Average	14	18%	1	3%	13	33%
	Not so well	10	13%	0	0%	10	25%
	Not well at all	5	7%	0	0%	5	13%
	NA	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
Communicates in Spanish	Very well	37	49%	33	92%	4	10%
	Well	9	12%	3	8%	6	15%

	Average	15	20%	0	0%	15	38%
	Not so well	7	9%	0	0%	7	18%
	Not well at all	5	7%	0	0%	5	13%
	NA	3	4%	0	0%	3	8%
Taken ESL	Previously	26	34%	21	58%	5	13%

The data I provide in tables 5 and 6 above indicates that almost half of the students who completed the self-identity questionnaire self-identified as LEP (47%). The majority of this self-identified LEP population is between the ages of 18 to 20 (86%), and all self-identified LEP students are under the age of 25. Out of all students who took this questionnaire 66% stated they were born in the United States, 26% stated they were born in Mexico, and 8% either did not respond or stated they were born in another country. An interesting result based on the data in tables 5 and 6 shows that the birth location of students who self-identified as LEP is almost equal when comparing students born in the US and Mexico with 44% stating they were born in the US, and 50% stating they were born in Mexico, the other 6% did not list a birth location. More than half of all the students (64%) who took this questionnaire stated their first language learned was Spanish, 32% stated their first language was English, and 4% stated their first language was another language other than English or Spanish. When looking at only the self-identified LEP students who provided their first language, 100% stated it was Spanish, this 100% also stated that their second language was English. Interestingly, if you direct your attention to the data reported for the third language learned, the highest percentage of students who stated they learned a third language is from the students who self-identified as LEP (31% of the LEP population as opposed to 5% of the non-LEP population). The responses pertaining to primary language indicate that out of all students who took this questionnaire a higher percentage (53%) stated their primary language was Spanish as opposed to English (39%), and 7% indicated their primary language was something other than English or Spanish. Interestingly, as one might

assume, almost all of the self-identified LEP population (94%) stated that Spanish was their primary language, the other 6% accounted for students who did not provide a response to this question or responded with another language other than Spanish or English. For the students who self-identified as LEP the questions pertaining to primary language and first language learned indicate there could be a pattern between both of these indicators as both of these percentages for this population were very high for Spanish (94% and 100%) and almost non-existent for English (3% and 0%). When looking at the question regarding students' ethnicity/nationality, out of the entire student population who completed the questionnaire only 4% stated they were American. The percentage of students who declared themselves Hispanic, Latino, Mexican-American or Mexican totals to 90%, leaving 6% of this population as other or not provided. This number coincides with the overall Hispanic population at UTPA (90.1%) previously referenced in the Introduction chapter of this study. Going back to the ethnicity/nationality data, none of the students who self-identified as LEP stated they were American, and all self-identified LEP students who did declare an ethnicity or nationality declared themselves Hispanic, Latino, Mexican-American or Mexican.

The following rows in tables 5 and 6 above include all of the self-identity questionnaire student responses pertaining to the students' perceptions of their ability with reading, writing, speaking, and communicating in English as well as in Spanish and includes one final row with students' responses on whether or not they were previously enrolled in an English as a Second Language (ESL) course. This last field was included for the purpose of identifying trends and/or any patterns between students who self-identified as LEP and students who were previously enrolled in an ESL course. One can easily assume that because students have taken an ESL course which has identified them as needing assistance with the English language, that they may

self-identify as LEP based on the responses provided on the self-identity questionnaire. In future developmental education courses instructors could potentially identify students needing assistance with regards to any language issues through identifying which students were previously enrolled in an ESL course.

Naturally, because students self-identified as LEP by using pre-identified criteria (Table 3), some of the patterns that are apparent are due to this categorization. For example, when comparing the percentage of LEP students in the second two number/percentage columns with the percentage of non-LEP students in the last two number/percentage columns an obvious patterns shows that all students who self-identified as LEP identified as having a higher reading, writing, speaking, and communication proficiency in Spanish than the students who did not self-identify as LEP. Another obvious pattern shows that almost all students who self-identified as LEP did so by rating their fluency in all Spanish fluency fields (reading, writing, speaking and communication) "Very well" or "Well" and none rated their proficiency in either of these fields as "Not well at all". In fact, in only one of these fields did one student rate their proficiency in Spanish as "Not so well" and out of all the students who self-identified as LEP only four rated their proficiency in these fields as average, the majority of students rated their proficiency in Spanish as "Very well". When looking at the non-LEP students this trend is consistent with the previous trend, showing almost all students who did not identify as LEP as having a higher percentage of students stating that their proficiency with reading, writing, speaking and communicating in English was either "Very well" or "Well", with a smaller percentage stating their proficiency in these fields was "Average", and an even smaller percentage stating their proficiency in some of these fields was "Not so well". Obvious trends, considering how students self-identified.

Some trends to take into consideration that are not so apparent are between the LEP and non-LEP population. If you look at the row that addresses reading English proficiency, LEP and non-LEP students responded "Well" almost identically (36% - LEP / 38% - non-LEP). This trend continues with the rest of the LEP and non-LEP population in the other rows that address English and Spanish proficiency; however, it is not as apparent in these rows as it is with the reading proficiency row in English. The variance is lower under "Well" in LEP and non-LEP populations. The biggest variance, however, is between the LEP and non-LEP population with students who responded "Very well" to the different language proficiency questions. Another trend is that students in the first two columns responded to the "Writes in English" and the "Writes in Spanish" question the least with "Very well" as compared to the other questions that pertain to reading, speaking, and communicating in both English and Spanish; these students then responded to reading as the second lowest with "Very well". All of the data in the table above that was referenced for the purpose of identifying these trends was self-reported by students through the self-identity questionnaire.

Students who self-identified as LEP did so through providing English and Spanish language proficiency information as well as location of birth and primary language information which I then inserted in a database for the purpose of categorizing these students' responses ultimately leading me to the students who met the criteria needed in order to self-identify as LEP. (The criteria needed in order to self-identify as LEP was previously explained in the Methodology chapter and has been provided once more in the table below (Table 7)). In this table, however, I have also included the number of students who self-identified based on the type of criteria that was met. Some students self-identified as LEP by meeting two of these criteria (3 students) while the majority identified by meeting only one of these criteria; this would account

for the total number of LEP students being higher than the previously mentioned number of 36

students. There are patterns between this table and the previous table as the previous table

indicated what students responded to the questions that qualified them as self-identified LEP

students. Table 7 below simply quantifies and categorizes these responses based on the type of

criteria students needed to meet in order to self-identify as LEP.

Table 7. Number of Students Identified as LEP Through Identity Criteria Indicators	
Identity Criteria Indicators	Students
1: Students who are born in another country (Mexico); Students who answered below average on any English proficiency question	4
2: Students who answered below average on any English proficiency question; Students who answered above average on any Spanish proficiency question	32
3: Students who answered Spanish as primary language; Students who answered below average on English proficiency question	3

As one can see in table 7 above, the vast majority of students (32) self-identified as LEP

through meeting the second set of criteria based on students' fluency with reading, writing,

speaking and communicating in English and in Spanish. Students who responded with below

average on any English proficiency question and above average on any Spanish proficiency

question self-identified as LEP based on this type of criteria. I previously provided a justification

for using these sets of criteria in the "Methodology" chapter.

In the following table (Table 8) I include qualitative data focusing on the challenges

and/or difficulties the self-identified LEP students provided on the self-assessment questionnaire

pertaining to the research-based best practices that were employed in their respective

developmental reading classroom. Out of the 36 total students who self-identified as LEP and

completed the self-assessment questionnaire only 19 participated in providing feedback that was

identifiable by stating that either they did not experience any challenges and/or difficulties or

they did experience some challenges and/or difficulties with the research-based best practices

employed in their developmental reading course. These students' responses are in no specific

order but rather are broken down by type of best practice employed in their classroom and categorized by instructor.

The student responses included in tables 8 and 9 below are tied to the specific best practice their instructor employed in their classroom (Table 4). The end of semester self-assessment questionnaire I administered to students asked questions specific to the best practices their instructors employed in their respective class. For example, the first row on table 8 below that reflects "Instructor 1 & 2" on the first column shows that both of these instructors used the best practice "Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods" (second column) in their developmental reading courses. The questions I asked students to respond to on the self-assessment questionnaire can be found in Appendix B and are listed separately by instructor (Instructor 1 – Instructor 4). An example of how I structured these questions in the self-assessment questionnaire that addresses the best practice shown on the first row in table 8 below is as follows. A statement such as this one was included before each question pertaining to a best practice "In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "work together in small groups a great deal". The question that followed was the following "Did you experience any difficulty while working together in small groups (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students conversations, language issues, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below" (Appendix B). The student's responses are provided on tables 8 and 9 in the third column.

Below this table I have included another table (Table 9) that illustrates the positive responses that students provided for these same best-practices also broken down by instructor and best practice. The positive responses reflect that students did not experience any challenges

and/or difficulties with the research-based best practices employed in their course. None of the

student's written responses have been altered or corrected.

Table 8. LEP Student Responses Expressing Challenges and/or Difficulties		
Instructor	**Research-Based Best Practices**	**Student Responses to Questions Inquiring on Students Difficulty with the RBBP**
Instructor 1 & 2	Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods	"My difficulty with my writing is the grammar??? Also I have in my mind what I want to put, but I don't know how to explain" "I'm still having language issues, and was difficult to discuss"
Instructor 1 &4	Teach Critical Thinking	"I have a difficulty because English is not my first language, so it's a little hard for me reading and writing above all I need to learn more vocabulary" "Actually when I came from mexico it was difficult to learn to speak and write in english" "Yes. Specially where I was aked to write a minimum for example the last essay. I was not able to write 2 pages I just wrote one. If it has a minimum or maximum I usually have difficulties. Along with the usual like vocabulary and understanding" "It was difficult to work with cold readings, they were long and too much of vocabulary, I struggled to understand most of the cold readings we read"
Instructor 2	Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements	"With the readings I had some problems at the beginning because I didn't understand all the words, but it dissapeared with time and talk about wrutung. This course really helped me (Eng 1301) to improve my writing skills"
Instructor 3	Teach Learning Strategies	"I didn't have any difficulties at all trying to speak or something, however, I did have problems when I needed a revision and the peer revision was made with classmates that didn't fully revised at all so I couldn't improve much my work because a second hand opinion" "Yes, it was difficult I had writer's block"
Instructor 3 & 4	Using Active Learning	"Sometimes I didn't know how to tell someone else how to improve their work"

	Techniques	"I wanted to tell the group about my writing but I always get shy and I don't like to talk in front of people" "Yes because as I told before some classmates didn't had the same motivation to keep improving and going on with the stages so the class had to repeat the stages or had to take more days" "Almost everybody gets along and were are not shy at all. Only about 2 or 3 people so that helped a lot. I did experience some difficulty with someor other students writing because they would write big sentences that didn't make sense because of the translation from English to Spanish but at the end it would make sense" "I had difficulties reading other students writing. Because I sometimes got confused of what they were trying to say"

The data I provide in table 8 above indicates that there are several self-identified LEP students who expressed challenges and/or difficulties with the research-based best practices instructors employed in their courses. The majority of these students' challenges and/or difficulties pertain to grammar, language issues such as vocabulary, a lack of proficiency with the English language, issues on how to provide accurate student feedback, and communication issues with other students pertaining to language. The majority of responses among these students seem to be their familiarity with the English language and the vocabulary. This should, however, come as no surprise if these students are in fact LEP as they have self-identified. In fact, it should be apparent that some of these self-identified LEP students (as well as some non-LEP students) would naturally have problems with some of these best-practices as well as any practices that are employed in any classroom where English is the sole language used for instruction. This, however, is not the case with all self-identified LEP students who completed the self-assessment questionnaire.

In the following tables (Tables 9-10) I illustrate how the self-identified LEP students responded positively to these same research-based best practices, again these responses are in no specific order but rather are broken down by type of best practice employed in each developmental reading classroom by instructor.

Table 9. LEP Student Positive Responses		
Instructor	**Research-Based Best Practice (RBBP)**	**Student Responses to Questions Inquiring on Students Difficulty with the RBBP**
Instructor 1 & 2	Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods	"Well, it was ok to work on groups, I was shy during these activities but after time I got involved in participation and it was better, I also knew my new friends" "I did not experience any difficulty because I like to work in grops. I get along with people very easy" "No I didn't have any difficulty working in small groups. Sometimes helped a lot "The first time we worked in groups, I was scared of not understanding what others tell me. As an ESL student actually hearing them talking to each other helped me, and if I was feeling shy by doing this, right now I feel way different"
Instructor 1 & 4	Teach Critical Thinking	"No. I didn't have any difficulty writing a purposefully assignment. Just needed to know how to do it" "No, it wasn't difficult." "No, I didn't., I could understand everything explained."
Instructor 2	Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements	"No because we all workd as one and shared ideas"
Instructor 3	Teach Learning Strategies	"I don't think I had issues with in the english classes even though english is not my first language my professor's taugh me gwell" "Not really, everything was very welled explained. I guess the only difficulty was managing my time in order to sit

Instructor		Student Response
		down and just dedicated my time to this project"
Instructor 3 & 4	Using Active Learning Techniques	"No, it was all fun and easy"
		"I don't have difficulties with working in groups. At the contrary, my classmates help me with everything"
		"No, all group work was easy and fun"
		"No, I actually enjoy working in groups and with other students"
		"probably at the beginning , when I came to the USA, but now not anymore"
		"No, I did not. Actually I like working in groups"
Instructor	**Research-Based Best Practice (RBBP)**	**Student Responses to Questions Inquiring on how the RBBP Helped**
Instructor 1 & 2	Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods	"I got the chance to see different point of view for particular questions. It was interesting"
		"Because is another way of communicating"
		"Working in groups help me a lot, because two heads is better than one, there were a variety of different ideas, the discussions were more active. All this help me in my doing work"
		"It helped me to discuss the assignment lectures, to make difficult questions about it"
		"To find faster the answers and having more ideas to support our assignment"
		"It gave me a clear idea of what we were talking about and encourage to participate"
		"Working on groups really helped me, because my peers tend to help me in any part that I have troubles with"
Instructor 1 &4	Teach Critical Thinking	"Doing journals and reading"
		"It help me to understand better"

		"I think to writing more, it's the way I think it can help me" "I did help me understand a lot more since the teacher taught me a different way to make connection with reading" "making ideas, connecting meanings and also with your grammar" "Well yes if I practice I will do better" "This was a key task for my personal grown. Now I am more confident about my writing skills and my understanding of texts" "The writing really help me in class, it was important the writing, so we can be able to discuss it at class, it was excellent to discuss it at class because I was able to understand better the articles we writed about" "It helped me to organize my thoughts about the lectures" "That every 49nglish or lecture was related with the next lecture that the teacher was assigning us at the class" "Increase my writing skills"
Instructor 2	Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements	"It help me be more creative and smarter" "What I did in this course was really helpful with my others college courses and it helped me especially by understanding readings and creating good representations of a text"
Instructor 3	Teach Learning Strategies	"because it shows you ways you can read and write that maybe you didn't know how to apply" "it helped me a lot talking in research terms. It improved my skills because we were focused on one project and we gived fully attention and knowledge to it" "Writing about just one major writing project helped because we had minor stages which helped me think about a final paper. It was actually better this way because you stick to one idea all along the process and you really get to

		know your tropic"
		"It helped me because I got to interact with people, surveyed them. I got to read difficult articles"
Instructor 3 & 4	Using Active Learning Techniques	"It helped me see the other students point of view"
		"It help me by learning how to interact with others"
		"It helpe me because we had different opinions and we would argue until we everybody gets to the same point"
		"For me it helped me improve my english"
		"I feel more comfortable, and I read and contribute more"
		"because I watch mistakes and didn't do them while I write and they taught me some writing things to improve"
		"I got new ideas for my own writings and I helped them by telling them what I thought would be better to write about and telling them what could sound better"
		"When I had ideas from other writings it gave me ideas on how to make mine if I had a thought"
		"This helped me out because I would sometimes incorporate their ideas with mine and it would become something better"

According to table 9, not all self-identified LEP students who completed the self-assessment questionnaire responded with experiencing challenges and/or difficulties with the research-based best practices that were employed in their developmental reading course. In fact, more than half of the self-identified LEP students responded positively to these best practices. When looking at the first part of this table that asks students if they had any difficulty with the research-based best practice their instructor employed, the majority of students stated they experienced no difficulty and that they thought some of the practices included "fun" activities.

Two student's responses, however, were slightly different within this category in the sense that they addressed their LEP status, and are worth noting. One student responded by stating "The first time we worked in groups, I was scared of not understanding what others tell me. As an ESL student actually hearing them talking to each other helped me, and if I was feeling shy by doing this, right now I feel way different". The second students response was the following "I don't think I had issues with in the english classes even though english is not my first language my professor's taugh me gwell". These two students not only responded positively to the best practices their instructors employed in their developmental reading course, but also justified their positive responses by addressing that they are LEP, and that these practices have aided them in being more proficient in English. These, of course, are characteristics of these best practices that are worth noting, even though not all students replied with these same responses, it is important to note that these two students did. The sample size this study looks at (19 self-identified LEP students who participated in responding to both the self-identity and self-assessment questionnaires with responses that were useful for this study) is fairly low, however, if a percentage of these students felt that these best-practices not only aided them in class, but also aided them in being more proficient in English while enrolled in developmental reading, this observation could prove beneficial for educators employing these same practices with a similar population.

The next part of table 9 above, below the area that focuses on how students responded if they experienced any difficulty with the research-based best practices their instructor employed focuses on how students responded to questions inquiring on how the research-based best practice helped them in their course. This table is a little lengthy as many of these students had positive things to say regarding how they felt the research-based best practices employed assisted

them in their developmental reading course. Out of the 19 students who completed both the self-identity and self-assessment questionnaire with responses that pertained to the scope of this study there were a total of 38 positive responses that were made. Out of the 38 total responses, 33 were positive; this would mean that 87% of the self-identified LEP population who participated in completing both the self-identity and self-assessment questionnaires agreed that the research-based best practices that were employed did in fact help them in their developmental reading course.

I also included other questions not pertaining to best practices in the self-assessment questionnaires that were administered to students during the last week of classes. These questions also focused on students perceptions, but were not centered on a best-practice like the previous questions. Instead they focused on questions pertaining to any type of language difficulties experienced in their developmental course, any other types of difficulties that were experienced in this course, and what students enjoyed most about their developmental reading course or what helped them become better readers in this course or in any other courses. I included these questions for the purpose of gathering overall perceptions of the self-identified LEP students and identifying any practices they enjoyed not due to the utilization or aid of the research-based best practices employed in their course which could in turn yield positive data that could be used for future modification or creation of practices directly benefiting LEP students. I've included the student's responses to these questions in the tables below (Table 10 through Table 12). These tables are sorted by the instructor who taught the developmental reading course. Only responses that were relevant were included in tables 10 through 12.

Table 10. Student Responses to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire	
Question: Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class?	
Instructor	**Student Response**
Instructor 1	"Yes, problems of pronunciation, writing and understand readings. I started being a failing student but now I think I can get at least a C" "No Just in my writing" "It wasn't too much or difficulties, I do know how to write and read in english, the hardest part of all is the vocabulary, words that I don't hear or use daily" "Not at all, maybe a little bit, because I don't understand the purpose of what we suppose to do"
Instructor 2	"This class helped me too much" "No I did not have any difficulties"
Instructor 3	"As an ESL student there's always problems withing language, but most of the time the professors explain so well that I undertsand every single detail"
Instructor 4	"Sometimes when I didn't know how to express my ideas" "English was my second language and I am not used to all the English vocabulary or expressing myself by writing" "no I haven't because I'm self confident and I'm not shy of my english even if it is a second language" "Not really. Maybe just a little bit with the articles because I wouldn't understand something sometimes but other than that no" "Yes. Sometimes I got difficulties explaining what I had to say"

The table above (Table 10) addresses whether or not students faced any difficulties with the English language in their developmental reading course. The data I provide in this part of the table indicates that students did in fact face some issues. These issues fall under the categories of pronunciation, writing, understanding the readings, vocabulary, the English language, and expressing ideas. Some students simply stated that they did not have any difficulties.

Table 11. Student Responses to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire	
Question: What difficulties (if any) did you experience in this class?	
Instructor	**Student Response**
Instructor 1	"Of been consistent. Having the powerwill to finish my readings. Avoid distractions etc" "Sometimes I use to struggle because I wasn't prepare to do all that homework" "Journals" "I just not being used to write summaries and to read a lot" "The only difficult is that the class is in engkish, but itgood to increase my skills."
Instructor 2	"I did not have any difficulties" "Essays was the hardest thing for me" "Probably the meaning of some words"
Instructor 3	"Making any kind of paper and especially reading long articles with complicated words on them"
Instructor 4	"I could be on time all the time and sometimes I couldn't understand what they were talking about" "Nothing really. Everything was well explained and the teacher was great at helped out with things we didn't understand. I guess the only thing was time in order to do homework" "Writer's block"

In table 11 above, I report the responses students provided to the question pertaining to any difficulties they may have faced in their developmental reading course. These responses consist of students stating they had difficulty with assignments, they lacked drive, they didn't understand what was expected, and more importantly they faced difficulties with the English language, English vocabulary, and writing in English. The concerns these students voiced in this section of the self-assessment questionnaire reiterates their concern with their proficiency in

English that was voiced in the previous question that asked students to identify any difficulties

had with the English language as it pertains to their developmental reading course.

Table 12. Student Responses to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire	
Question: What did you enjoy most about the class, and/or what helped you become better readers both in this class and in your other classes?	
Instructor	**Student Response**
Instructor 1	"Learning to underline, highlight, and making side notes. I is very helpful and I didn't know it" "About the topics that we read" "It was an excellent instructor, it was fun and interesting to be part of this class" "The part that I enjoy most was reading" "yes I enjoyed to use some strategies I didn't know before"
Instructor 2	"The teacher. She is great and a very special teacher/ In all my school years, she is the best one so far" "Everything, I enjoyed everything" "I enjoy doing my work and learning a lot" "I really liked the reading and also the teachers because she is a really good person" "Well I proved on my writing skill so much!"
Instructor 3	"I enjoyed everything she taught us" "Learning on how to improve my writing skills and to read as often, now I tend to do it all the time"
Instructor 4	"What I liked most was that they didn't give up on me" "That for the first time I took my time to read more about important stuff" "I enjoyed developing my essay and bringing it do daily life, finding it a way to help people" "I enjoyed that everyone was always here to help, both students and teacher" "Interns"

In this last table (Table 12), I include the final question students were asked pertaining to what they enjoyed most about their developmental reading course and/or what helped them (the student) become better readers both in their developmental reading course as well as in their other current courses. The responses students provided in this section can be broken down into several sub-categories. For example, some students responded by stating that they learned new techniques or strategies that helped them in this course as well as other courses. Other students stated they enjoyed the course readings and writing assignments, others that they enjoyed the instructors and the support the instructors provided, and a few stated they enjoyed everything about the course including the assignments. All of this information can provide useful feedback for future instruction modification and past and future pedagogical justification for instructors regarding decisions pertaining to pedagogy. This information is especially useful for this study by providing student feedback on not only what they had difficulties with, but also what students viewed as positive aspects of this course which can be tied to the types of practices that were employed in these developmental reading courses.

Summary of the Findings

According to the data I collected through this study and the findings referenced throughout this chapter, students who self-identified as Hispanic and LEP did have some concerns pertaining to difficulty with the English language in their developmental reading courses as would be expected. The majority of students who stated they had difficulties, centered on their lack of proficiency with reading, writing, speaking and communicating in English. These students concerns are referenced in tables 10 through 12. However, the self-identified LEP students who had no difficulties with the English language in their developmental reading course with the research-based best practices employed, outweighs the responses of students who stated

they experienced challenges and/or difficulties. In fact, some students stated that although they did have difficulties pertaining to their lack of English proficiency, they felt the best practices that were employed in their courses aided them in becoming more proficient in English, rather than hindered them (Table 9).

Based on these findings, the research-based best practices that instructors are employing in their developmental reading courses with the self-identified LEP population are perceived by the LEP students I surveyed to be beneficial. However, this is not to say that all self-identified LEP students responded positively to these practices. Students who reported difficulties with these best practices based on their perceptions of their experiences in these classes could suggest that because some of the LEP students reported difficulties with their learning the English language, instructors should consider whether and how they could modify their practices to meet these students' needs. Prior to this modification of practice, instructors should have an awareness of what students' experiences and needs are. Students who have trouble with English may have an increased difficulty with any research-based best practice because they demand that students read, write, and communicate in English. Modification of these practices could consist of integrating research-driven strategies used for students who are LEP with the best practices that are employed in developmental education courses. This type of modification or movement could potentially result in a strain of new research-based best practices that might prove to be affective with LEP students who enroll in developmental education courses.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Brief Overview

In the previous chapter I outlined and explained the data I collected as well as the results this data yielded. Explaining the data and the results was facilitated by using tables 5 through 12 that addressed each part of this study and the data collected in each part of this study. These tables illustrate student's responses in aggregate form for the purpose of explaining trends and patterns among and between differing variables. The first tables (Table 5 and Table 6) identify the LEP student population in the four developmental reading courses this study focused on. These tables break down all the students who participated in completing the self-identity questionnaire by LEP and non-LEP as well as by the responses that were provided by each of these students within their LEP and non-LEP population. This data was significant to this study for the purpose of identifying trends and/or patterns between the LEP students and the non-LEP students. The following table (Table 7) outlined the criteria that students needed to meet in order to self-identify as LEP; this table also includes how many students met the different types of criteria. Patterns between this table and the previous were also explained more in detail. The remaining tables in the previous chapter (Tables 8-12) consisted of student feedback as it pertains to the best-practices that were employed by their respective instructor in their developmental reading course. This feedback was broken down into separate tables by negative (students expressing challenges and/or difficulties) and positive feedback. The last 3 tables

(Tables 10 through 12) specifically focus on questions that did not pertain to research-based best practices, but still focused on student feedback. The questions that students were asked were geared toward their overall perception of the course, inquiring on what difficulties they experienced with the English language (if any) or in general, what they enjoyed most about the developmental course, and what helped them become better readers both in their developmental course as well as in their other courses.

All tables were explained in terms of the results this data revealed and what these results mean for this study, for developmental education, and for the research-based best practices that were employed in each course.

Discussion of Results

The results my study yielded found that the self-identified Hispanic LEP students responded with more positive feedback than negative (students expressing challenges and/or difficulties) in response to the research-based best practices that instructors employed in their developmental reading courses. These results are based on the feedback that was given by students on the self-assessment questionnaire that asked students specific questions pertaining to each of the best practices that their instructor employed. Although the majority of students did respond positively to the best-practices instructors employed in their developmental courses by stating they did not experience any challenges and/or difficulties, there were a select few students whom responded with experiencing difficulties and/or challenges with the best-practices employed. In an effort to address future self-identified or identified LEP student's needs, instructors teaching developmental courses as well as any other courses should take into consideration the perspectives of all students enrolled in said courses with regards to the practices that are being employed and their overall experiences in these course.

Limitations

Some of the possible methodological limitations encountered while pursuing the objectives under this study included the accuracy of self-reported data from students. Because my study primarily focused on student's perceptions and self-reportage, one of the limitations is that the findings this study yielded might not be extended to other types of populations with the same degree of certainty. This is mostly because the findings this research yielded were not tested for the purposes of determining whether or not these findings were due to chance. The self-reported data could also potentially contain sources of bias such as selective memory where students might not be able to remember certain experiences or events that occurred at some point during this course, or exaggeration where students could represent certain outcomes or events as more or less significant as that which is suggested from the data reported. A lack of data I believe also limited the scope of this study and the overall analysis of results by presenting obstacles with finding trends as the number of students who participated in the entirety of the study was very limited towards the end of the semester when the self-assessment questionnaire was administered.

The possible limitations I encountered as the researcher included not having access to a fifth developmental education reading course at the request of the instructor teaching this course. This prevention resulted in having a smaller sample size of students and a smaller pool of research-based best practices to include in the study. Other limitations included studying the longitudinal effects of this research for the purposes of measuring any change or stability with a similar type of population as this research was constrained by the time commitments students abide by in order to graduate in a timely manner at this institution. A possible cultural bias could also be noted as a limitation; prior to analyzing the data this study yielded, I must admit that I

60

had assumptions about students who self-reported as limited English proficient and their ability

to respond positively to the research-based best practices that were employed in these students

developmental education reading classrooms as they do not directly address these students

limited English proficiency. My assumption that these practices were not affective with the self-

identified LEP population, however, was incorrect based on this population's response. There

are, however, no traces of this bias in the analysis of the data this study yielded. The English

fluency of self-reported limited English proficient students could also be noted as a possible bias

that could have hindered students in their responding to some of the questions in the self-identity

and self-assessment questionnaires as both of these questionnaires were disseminated in English

only. This, however, was not the case as the majority of the students who self-identified as LEP

did in fact respond to the self-assessment questionnaire which was imperative to this study.

Considerations for Future Research

Although there has been a significant amount of research conducted with students who

are required to enroll in a developmental education course, I think it's important to delve deeper

into the populations that are placed within these courses, specifically focusing on their

background for the purpose of identifying if certain strategies work better than others with

different types of populations in different developmental courses. This study looks at students

placed in developmental education reading courses who indicated they were Hispanic, Latino,

Mexican-American or Mexican and who self-identified as limited English proficient. The

purpose behind identifying this population was vital to this study for the function of determining

whether the practices that were employed with such students in developmental reading courses

yielded positive or negative (students expressing challenges and/or difficulties) results. This

particular study, however, focused on this specific population because of the regions

demographics and student population served at the institution. Other institutions could replicate this study to serve their own purposes of identifying their limited English proficient population in various developmental education courses as well as other courses and the effectiveness of the practices employed in such courses with specific populations significant to their region/institution or otherwise. Expanding this research to include more students in a future study of this same nature would also be beneficial. There also exists a body of literature within rhetoric and composition that could prove to be beneficial for this type of study. This literature, however, was not included due to time constraints previously mentioned and national and state literature I wished to focus on.

In addition, individuals who would like to pursue future research on the best practices students responded positively to (students expressing no challenges and/or difficulties) or negatively (expressed challenges and/or difficulties) should take into consideration student's responses to these practices and modify them if applicable. The modified best-practices could then be employed with a similar group of students for feedback on effectiveness. Although this study did not pursue this, it could be pursued by other researchers that focus more on longitudinal studies. Due to the time commitments this study abided by, this objective was not accomplishable through this empirical study.

Final Thoughts

I conducted this study to identify the perceived struggles and successes of LEP students enrolled in developmental education reading courses focusing specifically on the research-based best practices employed in these courses with aspirations of improving these practices with a specific Hispanic LEP population of students. The results my study yielded were based on positive feedback (students expressing no challenges and/or difficulties) the majority of students

provided as well as some negative feedback (students expressing challenges and/or difficulties) received from fewer students regarding the best practices that were employed in their respective developmental education reading course. The aim of my study was not to discredit any practice or any instructor using these practices, but rather to measure student's feedback on these practices and to take into consideration students' perspectives on these practices for the purpose of reflecting specifically on LEP students' responses. Although the analysis of data does state that the majority of students responded positively to the best practices instructors employed, one should take into consideration that all living creatures evolve with time and students are no exception to this natural law, so naturally as students evolve so should the education they receive. This being said, the practices that are employed in any course should also evolve to meet the needs of students. Best-practices should continue to be best-practices by continuously improving their methods based on research and qualitative instructor and student data.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

SELF-IDENTITY STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE
Self-Identity

Please provide your name _____

What is your age? _____

What is your gender?
___ Male   ___ Female

Where were you born? _____

What was the first language you learned?
___ English   ___ Spanish   Other: _____

What was the second language you learned?
___ None   ___ English   ___ Spanish   Other: _____

What was the third language you learned?
___ None   ___ English   ___ Spanish   Other: _____

What is your primary language?
___ English   ___ Spanish   Other: _____

How would you classify yourself?
___ Hispanic or Latino   ___Mexican American   ___ Mexican   ___ American
Other: _____

How well do you think you read in English?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

How well do you think you write in English?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

How well do you think you speak in English?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

How well do you think you communicate with others in English?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

If you speak Spanish:
How well do you think you read in Spanish?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all
If you speak Spanish:
How well do you think you write in Spanish?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

If you speak Spanish:
How well do you think you speak in Spanish?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

If you speak Spanish:
How well do you think you communicate with others in Spanish?
___ Very well   ___ Well   ___ Average   ___ Not so well   ___ Not well at all

Have you ever taken any ESL (English as a Second Language) classes?
___ Yes   ___ No

If English IS NOT your first language how do you think the university can help enhance your English reading/writing skills?

If English IS your first language how do you think the university can help enhance your English reading/writing skills?

What's the one worry you have related to reading and your college classes?

APPENDIX B

SELF-ASSESSMENT STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Self-Assessment – Instructor 1

Please provide your name _____

This questionnaire looks at the instructional practices your professor used in your developmental education reading classroom. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask for your opinion regarding some of the instructional practices your professor utilized in this classroom. I'm interested in what you have to say as students, so please be honest in answering the following questions.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "work together in small groups a great deal".

Did you experience any difficulty while working together in small groups (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students conversations, language issues, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How did working together in small groups help you in your class (help with assignments and readings, discussing assignments and readings, hearing and talking about ideas, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "practice writing purposefully about what you read". An assignment that would fit this description would be your in-class writings, any cold-readings you were given or reflective essays you were asked to produce. All these assignments ask you to write purposefully about what you read.

Did you experience any difficulty with completing any assignments that asked you to write purposefully about what you read (had difficulty understanding the language, difficulty with English, any difficulty with writing or reading, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How did writing purposefully about what you read help you in your class (help with understanding the readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What difficulties (if any) did you experience in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What did you enjoy most about the class, and/or what helped you become better readers both in this class and in your other classes?

I would like to sit down and do an interview with students currently enrolled in developmental education reading classes, specifically students who might have problems with the English language. Please let me know if you would like to participate in a short interview by filling out the information below.
Name:

Phone Number/s:

Email:

Thank you for participating!

Self-Assessment – Instructor 4

Please provide your name _____

This questionnaire looks at the instructional practices your professor used in your developmental education reading classroom. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask for your opinion regarding some of the instructional practices your professor utilized in this classroom. I'm interested in what you have to say as students, so please be honest in answering the following questions.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "practice writing purposefully about what you read".

Did you experience any difficulty with practicing writing purposefully about what you read (had difficulty understanding the language, difficulty with English, any difficulty with writing or reading, difficulty understanding what was expected, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How do you think practicing writing purposefully about what you read helped you in your developmental reading class (help with understanding the readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor asked you to do the following as part of the class "if you had a question for your group members, write to them and keep track of their responses, which you can print up and bring to class to see what kind of replies and communication you are having with your peers".

Did you experience any difficulty while working in groups, reading other students writing or commenting on other students writing, and sharing ideas with group members (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students' communication, language issues, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How did working in groups, reading other students writing or commenting on other students writing, or sharing ideas about any questions you or your classmates had help you in your class (help with understanding questions or readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What difficulties (if any) did you experience in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What did you enjoy most about the class, and/or what helped you become better readers both in this class and in your other classes?

I would like to sit down and do an interview with students currently enrolled in developmental education reading classes, specifically students who might have problems with the English language. Please let me know if you would like to participate in a short interview by filling out the information below.
Name:

Phone Number/s:

Email:

Thank you for participating!

Self-Assessment – Instructor 2

Please provide your name _____

This questionnaire looks at the instructional practices your professor used in your developmental education reading classroom. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask for your opinion regarding some of the instructional practices your professor utilized in this classroom. I'm interested in what you have to say as students, so please be honest in answering the following questions.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "move into smaller groups so we (the class) can read and discuss several texts".

Did you experience any difficulty with getting into small groups and reading or discussing the texts you read (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students' conversations, language issues, difficulty understanding what was expected, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How do you think getting into small groups and reading or discussing the texts helped you in your developmental reading class (help with assignments and readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, hearing and talking about ideas, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

 In your developmental education reading class, your professor wanted to "introduce you to the complex and challenging readings tasks you will encounter throughout your college career and help you develop the reading and study strategies necessary for a rewarding college experience".

Did you experience any difficulty with the readings tasks your professor asked you to complete or with any reading and study strategies, (had difficulty understanding the language, difficulty with English, any difficulty with writing or reading, difficulty understanding what was expected, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How did the challenging and complex reading tasks your professor asked you to complete help you in your developmental reading class and/or other classes (help with understanding readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, helped you read better for other classes, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What difficulties (if any) did you experience in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What did you enjoy most about the class, and/or what helped you become better readers both in this class and in your other classes?

I would like to sit down and do an interview with students currently enrolled in developmental education reading classes, specifically students who might have problems with the English language. Please let me know if you would like to participate in a short interview by filling out the information below.
Name:

Phone Number/s:

Email:

Thank you for participating!

Self-Assessment – Instructor 3

Please provide your name _____

This questionnaire looks at the instructional practices your professor used in your developmental education reading classroom. The purpose of this questionnaire is to ask for your opinion regarding some of the instructional practices your professor utilized in this classroom. I'm interested in what you have to say as students, so please be honest in answering the following questions.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "work towards one major writing project, and you (the students) will do it through a set of distinct stages, revising along the way".

Did you experience any difficulty with your major writing project (portfolio) or revising your writing assignments (problems you had during research, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding what was expected, language issues, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How do you think working on one major writing project (portfolio) helped you in your developmental reading class (help with assignments and readings, introduced you to research, hearing and talking about ideas, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

In your developmental education reading class, your professor used an instructional practice that asks for students to "work in groups, reading each other's writing and commenting on it, (and) sharing ideas from homework".

Did you experience any difficulty while working in groups, reading other students writing or commenting on other students writing, or sharing ideas from your homework (not much student participation, felt shy speaking in front of other students, had difficulty understanding other students' conversations, language issues, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

How did working in groups, reading other students writing or commenting on other students writing, or sharing ideas from your homework help you in your class (help with understanding the readings, making connections between what you read and any ideas or thoughts, etc)? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

Did you have any difficulties having to do with language (English) in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What difficulties (if any) did you experience in this class? Please explain your answer in the space provided below.

What did you enjoy most about the class, and/or what helped you become better readers both in this class and in your other classes?

78

I would like to sit down and do an interview with students currently enrolled in developmental education reading classes, specifically students who might have problems with the English language. Please let me know if you would like to participate in a short interview by filling out the information below.

Name:

Phone Number/s:

Email:

Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for Developmental Reading Instructors – COMBINED

There are several instructional practices in your course syllabi that I want to inquire about. The purpose of this interview is to make connections between the instructional practices you are using in your developmental reading course and research that states these practices work for developmental students (research-based best practices).

1. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that your students will be "working in small groups a great deal".
   Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - The research-based best practice "Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods" lists *small group work* as one of these methods. For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice?
   - If not, why?

2. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that you want students to "practice writing purposefully about what you (they) read". Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - Research on the best practice "Teach Critical Thinking" states that this practice allows students to "*use logical structures of reasoning, to analyze information, and to apply these in understanding concepts and solving problems*". For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice based on the fact that you want students to "practice writing purposefully about what you (they) read"?
   - If not, why?

3. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that your students will be "working towards one major writing project, and you (the student) will do it through a set of distinct stages, revising along the way". This is being done with the use of a writing portfolio.
Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - The research-based best practice "Teach Learning Strategies" lists *using learning portfolios* as one of these methods. For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice?
   - If not, why?

4. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that you want students to "work in groups, reading each other's writing and commenting on it, (and) sharing ideas from homework". Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - Research on the best practice "Using Active Learning Techniques" states that *"in active learning, students are not required to spend all of their time sitting through lectures but, instead, are required to take actions and explore knowledge for themselves".* For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice based on the fact that you want students to "work in groups, reading each other's writing and commenting on it, (and) sharing ideas from homework"?
   - If not, why?

5. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that your students will "move into smaller groups so we (the class) can read and discuss several texts".
Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - The research-based best practice "Accommodate Diversity through Varied Instructional Methods" lists *small group work* as one of these methods. For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice?
   - If not, why?

6. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that you want to "introduce you (the student) to the complex and challenging reading tasks you (the student) will encounter throughout your (the student's) college career, and to help you (the student) develop the reading and study strategies necessary for a rewarding college experience". Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - Research on the best practice "<u>Linking Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements</u>" states that *"the most important measure of a developmental course's impact is whether or not students who pass the course also pass the next college course in the same subject"*. For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice based on the fact that you want to "introduce you (the student) to the complex and challenging reading tasks you (the student) will encounter throughout your (the student's) college career, and to help you (the student) develop the reading and study strategies necessary for a rewarding college experience"?
   - If not, why?

7. In your developmental reading syllabus you state that you want students to "practice writing purposefully about what you (they) read". Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?
   - Research on the best practice "<u>Teach Critical Thinking</u>" states that this practice allows students to "*use logical structures of reasoning, to analyze information, and to apply these in understanding concepts and solving problems*". For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice based on the fact that you want students to "practice writing purposefully about what you (they) read"?
   - If not, why?

8. In your developmental reading syllabus you ask students to do the following as part of the class "if you had a question for your group members, write to them and keep track of their responses, which you can print up and bring to class to see what kind of replies and communication you are having with your peers". Is this correct?
   - Have you pursued this instructional practice?
   - How do you feel it has worked with your students?
   - Do you see a difference in how this has worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?

- Research on the best practice "<u>Using Active Learning Techniques</u>" states that *"in active learning, students are not required to spend all of their time sitting through lectures but, instead, are required to take actions and explore knowledge for themselves"*. For the purpose of my study could I state that you are using this research-based best practice based on the fact that you want students to do the following as part of the class "if you had a question for your group members, write to them and keep track of their responses, which you can print up and bring to class to see what kind of replies and communication you are having with your peers"?
- If not, why?

9. Other research-based best practices are listed below.
    - Partaking in learning communities
    - Accommodating diversity through varied instructional methods
      -distance learning
      -self-paced instruction
      -individualized instruction
      -peer review of student work
      -collaborative learning
      -computer-based instruction
      -mastery learning
      -small-group work
    - Using supplemental instruction
    - Providing frequent/timely feedback
    - Linking developmental course content to college-level requirements
    - Teaching critical thinking
      -using logical structures of reasoning to analyze information, and to apply these in understanding concepts and solving problems
    - Teaching learning strategies
      -using learning portfolios to monitor students comprehension and to teach students to identify their learning strengths and weaknesses
    - Using active learning techniques
      -student discussion and criticism of each others' written work
      -student journal writing reflecting classroom experiences
      -students preparing for and leading class discussions

10. Would you say you use any of these other research-based best practices in your developmental reading course?
    - Which ones?
    - How?
    - How do you feel they have worked with your students?
    - Do you see a difference in how any of these have worked with students you think are English language learners or limited English proficient as opposed to students who you think are not?

11. In your opinion and from your experience of teaching students in developmental reading, do you feel that teaching students who you believe are limited English proficient students or English language learners is any different than teaching students who are proficient in English?

- What are some of challenges (if any)?
- Do you feel that these challenges impact the students learning? How?
- Do you alter your instructional practices if you think or know one of your students has difficulty with English (the language)?

12. Would you like to say anything further regarding the teaching of students in developmental reading who are limited English proficient or English language learners?

- Thoughts, concerns or recommendations?

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mr. Mauricio Eugenio de León received his Master of Arts degree in English under the Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies (RCLS) track through the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) the summer of 2012. Prior to his acceptance into the RCLS master's program at UTPA, he was awarded his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from this same institution, graduating with the honors of Cum Laude the summer of 2010. Mr. de León has been invited to join and is currently a member of various national and international honor societies. These include The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, The Golden Key International Honour Society, and the International English Honor Society of Sigma Tau Delta. While pursuing his undergraduate and graduate academic careers at UTPA, Mr. de León was also employed at this institution overseeing and coordinating various student success programs and initiatives through the Office of Undergraduate Studies under the previous direct supervision of the Senior Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and currently under the supervision of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. Any communication may be directed to Mr. de León's permanent mailing address at 1230 W. Madison in Harlingen Texas, 78550.